



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

January 30, 2006

News Release

MEXICAN NATIONAL ARRESTED IN MULTI-AGENCY TUNNEL PROBE

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today that one suspect has been arrested in connection with the ongoing investigation into the drug tunnel discovered last week linking warehouses in Otay Mesa, California and Tijuana, Mexico.

The suspect, Carlos Eugenio Cardenas-Calvillo, was taken into custody by ICE agents Saturday. The 44-year-old Mexican national made his initial appearance in U.S. District Court in San Diego this afternoon on charges of conspiracy to import a controlled substance. Investigators say the allegations against Cardenas stem from his ties to the Otay Mesa warehouse that concealed the U.S. access point for the highly sophisticated passageway.

The arrest came less than 24 hours after ICE issued an alert, warning that case leads indicated persons who had been in the tunnel or were responsible for its design or construction might be in imminent danger. ICE urged those individuals to come forward and contact ICE at any port of entry along the Mexican border. The agency pledged it would do everything in its power to ensure their safety.

The ongoing investigation is being carried out by the San Diego Tunnel Task Force made up of ICE, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol. Since the existence of the passageway was confirmed Wednesday night, Task Force investigators have been working round-the-clock following up a wide variety of leads.

“As this weekend’s arrest demonstrates, our investigation is progressing very quickly,” said Miguel Unzueta, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in San Diego. “The Task Force is working tirelessly to bring those responsible for this audacious crime to justice.”

The Task Force is receiving substantial support in the investigation from CBP’s forensic lab, which is conducting advanced fingerprint analysis and DNA sampling. In addition, ICE’s cybercrimes unit is assisting with computer forensics.

The tunnel discovery is the result of a long-term investigation by the Tunnel Task Force. The Task Force is using an array of high-tech equipment and intelligence information to pinpoint the location of underground passageways along the border in the region. Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered more than 20 cross-border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona.